

## Food bank representatives tour egg farm

By MARLA K. KUHLMAN ThisWeek Staff Writer Saturday, May 1, 2010 1:44 PM



Tim Hutson, operations manager of Ohio Fresh Eggs, Chuck Moore of the Food Pantry Network of Licking County and Lisa Hamler-Fugitt, executive director of the Ohio Association of Second Harvest Foodbanks tour the egg processing area for the Hillendale Farms/Ohio Fresh Eggs Croton farm.

Food bank representatives of hunger provider organizations across Ohio visited Croton's Ohio Fresh Eggs Wednesday to learn more about how eggs are produced in the state and to see the farm firsthand.

Chuck Moore, director of the Food Pantry Network (FPN) of Licking County, was among about 20 representatives, and he noted the cleanliness of the facility.

"I'm also amazed at the production there and the ability to get eggs out of the system quickly and to the grocery store," he said. "It's phenomenal how quickly the eggs get to the grocery."

Ohio egg farmers have a longtime partnership with the state's food banks, and recently continued their annual donation of eggs to food banks for Easter.

Hinda Mitchell, spokesperson for the Ohio Poultry Association, said this year alone, farmers donated more than 1.2-million eggs to the food banks.

Ohio Fresh Eggs/Hillendale has been a large part of that donation each year, so the tour was a timely way to underscore the importance of the partnership, she said.

For food banks, the opportunity to have fresh, high-protein eggs for hungry Ohioans is invaluable, according to Mitchell.

The Ohio contribution complements a national initiative being conducted by the United Egg Producers and Feeding America that provides more than 11-million eggs to food banks nationwide through a donation from America's egg farmers located across the country.

Ohio Fresh donated 345,000 eggs this year, with a retail value of \$28,000. Over the past three years, Mitchell said Ohio Fresh Eggs has given 86,400 dozen or 1,036,800 eggs for Easter.

Ohio, through its agricultural clearance program, also provides state funds to purchase eggs at a significantly reduced price, and that program has been in place since 2002.

Through the Ohio Association of Second Harvest Food (OASHF) banks, Licking County has benefited during Easter and the holidays, Moore said.

"We just ended our Operation Feed Campaign and we met our goal," he said. "We have a good supply of food. I know pantries are having a tough time. We're fortunate to be in this community. The community has come forward to make sure we can meet demands. They continue to take care of us."

The FPN distributes to 22 pantries in Licking County including the Croton Church of Christ that serves the Johnstown area, two pantries in Pataskala and one in Utica.

The OASHF's 12-member food banks provide hunger relief in all 88 Ohio counties. For information on food banks and hunger relief programs, visit OASHF online at [www.oashf.org](http://www.oashf.org) or call 614-221-4336.